

# Natural Communities of Louisiana



## Pine Flatwoods

**Rarity Rank:** S3/G2G3

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure

**Synonyms:** Wet Pine Flatwoods

**Ecological Systems:** CES203.375 East Gulf Coastal Plain Near-Coast Pine Flatwoods  
CES203.557 East Gulf Coastal Plain Southern Loblolly-Hardwood Flatwoods  
CES203.191 West Gulf Coastal Plain Wet Longleaf Pine Savanna and Flatwoods



### General Description:

- Found on the Pleistocene prairie terraces of Louisiana's East and West Gulf Coastal Plains
- Found in a mosaic with other flatwoods, savannahs, and bayhead swamps
- Occur on flat, low-relief areas with a high water table
- Soils are mesic, strongly acidic and fine sandy or silty loams with presence of a clay hardpan
- In Louisiana's Florida Parishes, *Pinus palustris* (longleaf pine) and *Pinus elliottii* (slash pine) are often co-dominants. In southwest Louisiana, only longleaf pine and *Pinus taeda* (loblolly pine) are present
- Fire dependent natural community
- Varies considerably in structure and somewhat in composition from one place to another, as a consequence of minor variations in topography, soil conditions, and hydrologic and fire regimes
- Has a stratified appearance with pine dominating the canopy, a low woody shrub layer, and a herbaceous layer

### Plant Community Associates

#### Common tree species include:

*Pinus palustris* (longleaf pine)  
*Pinus taeda* (loblolly pine)  
*Quercus nigra* (water oak)  
*Magnolia virginiana* (sweetbay magnolia)  
*Liquidambar styraciflua* (sweetgum)  
On wetter sites:  
*Taxodium distichum* (baldcypress)

*Pinus elliottii* (slash pine, SE LA)  
*Pinus glabra* (spruce pine, SE LA)  
*Quercus laurifolia* (laurel oak)  
*Acer rubrum* (red maple)  
*Nyssa sylvatica* (blackgum)

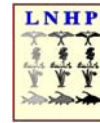
*Taxodium ascendens* (pondcypress, SE LA)

#### Common midstory and understory species include:

*Sabal minor* (palmetto)  
*Ilex coriacea* (sweet gallberry)  
*Lyonia lucida* (fetterbush, SE LA)  
*Morella cerifera* (waxmyrtle)

*Cyrilla racemiflora* (swamp cyrilla)  
*Ilex glabra* (littleleaf gallberry)  
*Hypericum* spp. (St. John's-worts)  
*Clethra alnifolia* (summer sweet, SE LA)

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## ***Common midstory and understory species continued:***

*Rubus* spp. (blackberries)

*Vaccinium* spp. (blueberries)

*Gaylussacia* spp. (huckleberries, SE LA)

## ***Common herbaceous species include:***

*Liatris* spp. (blazing-stars)

*Andropogon* spp. (broomsedges)

*Chaptalia tomentosa* (sunbonnet)

*Panicum* spp. (panic grasses)

## **Federally-listed plant & animal species:**

*Picoides borealis* (red-cockaded woodpecker)

Endangered; G2; S2

## ***Range:***

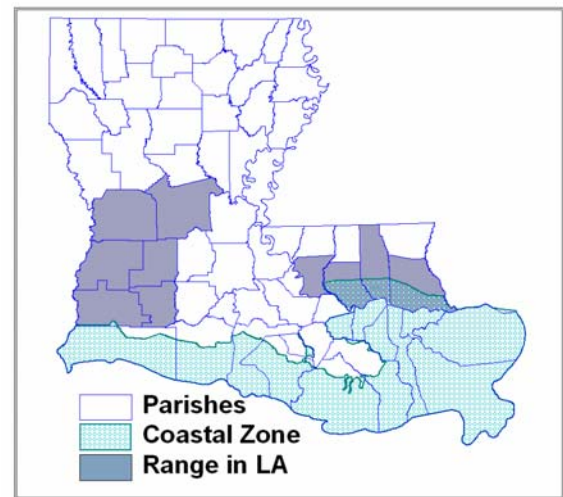
Within Louisiana, found primarily in the Florida Parishes and southwest LA with a few occurrences extending up into central LA

## ***LA River Basins:***

Pontchartrain, Pearl, Vermilion-Teche, Mermentau, Calcasieu, Sabine

## ***Threats:***

- Construction of roads, pipelines or utilities
- Conversion to slash or loblolly pine plantations
- Residential or commercial development
- Soil damage from timber harvesting and planting activities (eg. bedding)
- Hydrological alterations (to include adjacent areas)
- Contamination by chemicals (herbicides, fertilizers)
- Off-road vehicle use
- Fire exclusion or inappropriate fire regime
- Invasive exotic species



## ***Beneficial Management Practices:***

- Prevent conversion of existing natural forests to other land uses
- Use of growing season prescribed fire (April-June) at a frequency of every 5 to 10 years
- No logging during wet periods when the soil is saturated
- No bedding or other soil disturbance that may alter natural water flow patterns
- Prohibit off-road vehicle use, or restrict use to pre-existing trails
- Remove any invasive exotic plant species with use of spot herbicides or mechanical means